
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 6525

AN ACT CONCERNING CHILDHOOD OBESITY AND PHYSICAL EXERCISE IN SCHOOLS.

SUMMARY:

This bill prohibits school employees, during the regular school day, from (1) preventing a child in kindergarten through fifth grade from participating in his or her full recess period and (2) requiring any student in kindergarten through twelfth grade to engage in physical activity as a form of discipline.

The bill also establishes a 13-member task force to study the effects of obesity on children's health and report its finding to the Children's Committee by October 1, 2014.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2013

SCHOOL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY REQUIREMENTS

The bill prohibits school employees from preventing a student in kindergarten through fifth grade from participating in the entire time devoted to physical exercise in the regular school day. By law, public schools generally must include at least 20 minutes of physical exercise in each regular school day for such students.

The bill also prohibits school employees from requiring any student in kindergarten through twelfth grade to engage in physical activity as a form of discipline during the regular school day.

School Employees

Under the bill, a school employee is a (1) teacher, substitute teacher, school administrator, school superintendent, guidance counselor, psychologist, social worker, nurse, physician, school paraprofessional, or coach employed by a local or regional board of education or working in a public elementary, middle, or high school; or (2) person

who, in the performance of his or her duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students in public, elementary, or high school under a contract with the local or regional board of education.

CHILDHOOD OBESITY TASK FORCE

The bill establishes a task force to study the effects of obesity on children's health. The task force must:

1. gather and maintain current information on childhood obesity that can be used to better understand its impact on children's health;
2. examine the nutrition standards for all food the state procures;
3. explore the implementation of a tax on large-size sugary drinks, the revenue from which may be earmarked for childhood obesity prevention;
4. recommend the implementation of a pilot program, through a local or regional board of education, to schedule recess before lunch for students in kindergarten through twelfth grade; and
5. advise the governor and General Assembly on how to coordinate and administer state programs to reduce the incidence of childhood obesity.

The task force members must include:

1. the commissioners of the departments of Children and Families, Education, Public Health (DPH), and Social Services, or their designees;
2. the Children's Committee chairpersons, vice-chairpersons, and ranking members;
3. a licensed dietitian-nutritionist with a background in food service appointed by the DPH commissioner; and

4. two members of the public appointed by the Children's Committee chairpersons, one of whom is a children's health matters advocate and one of whom is an academic, civic, or cultural leader specializing in children's health matters.

All task force appointments must be made by July 31, 2013. The appointing authorities fill any vacancies.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Children Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 12 Nay 0 (03/12/2013)